

## Local Dignitaries Mark Re-Opening of Shellfish Beds in Kingston Bay

Senator Robert Hedlund joined Executive Office of Environmental Affairs Secretary Robert Durand and Fisheries and Wildlife Commissioner David Peters, along with other state and local officials, Wednesday at Gray's Beach in Kingston to celebrate the opening of the Kingston Bay and Outer Plymouth Harbor shellfish beds – the first time these historic shellfish beds have been open for use in several years.

The state's Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) recently determined that portions of the two areas in the towns of Duxbury and Plymouth now meet the National Shellfish Sanitation Program (NSSP) criteria to allow shellfishing. The improvement in water quality is due to a cooperative effort between the state and the towns of Duxbury, Kingston and Plymouth.

The Kingston Bay reclassification from "prohibited" for shell fishing to "conditionally approved" opens approximately 800 acres of the bay; about 300 acres on the Duxbury side, and roughly 500 acres on the Kingston side.

The Plymouth Outer Harbor reclassification will open approximately 1,013 acres of the Outer Harbor. About 855 acres on the Plymouth side and 158 acres on the Duxbury side of the harbor will now be open to shellfishing.

"This is a great day for the South Shore," said Hedlund. "Environmentalists and fishermen alike can celebrate this important milestone, and offi-

cials in the towns of Duxbury, Plymouth and Kingston should be proud of the efforts they made to improve their municipalities' water quality so that these historic beds could finally become operational again."

The three towns collaborated with state officials to improve water quality in the area through a number of initiatives.

The Town of Duxbury's Bay Road Project connected thirty houses with failed or questionable septic systems to an upland community waste disposal site. The Board of Health and the Conservation Commission have also been very aggressive in identifying pollution sources along the shorefront and work-

ing with the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and Coastal Zone Management (CZM). In addition, Duxbury Harbormaster and Shellfish Constable Donald M. Beers and his department have assisted the DMF with water sampling and have an excellent record on boat pump-outs.

The first shellfish closures of Kingston Bay and Plymouth Outer Harbor were ordered in 1926 when the western side of the bay and harbor were closed due to pollution. Portions of Kingston Bay have been closed since that time. Most of the Kingston Bay area that is re-opening has been closed to shellfishing since 1978.